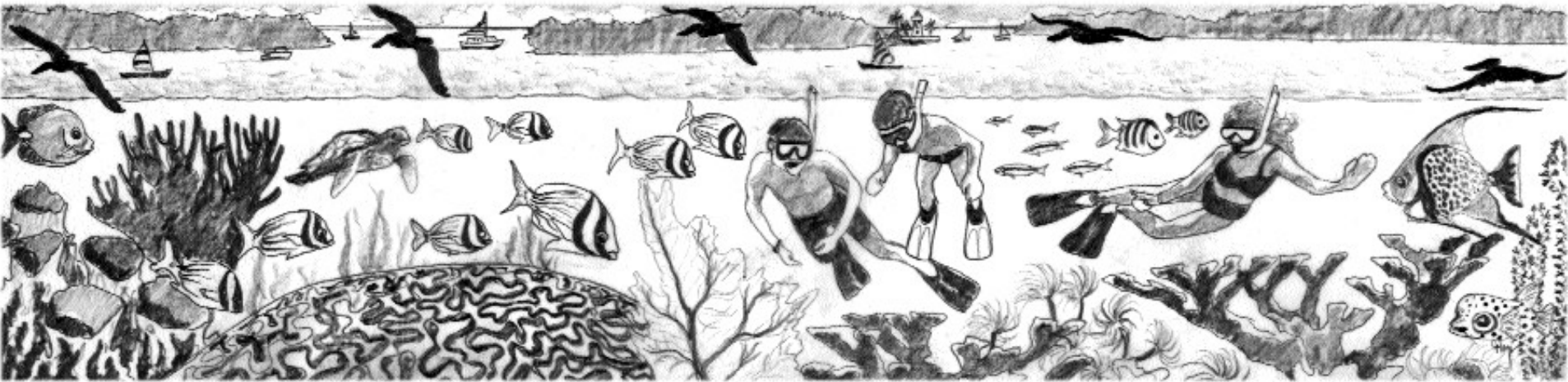
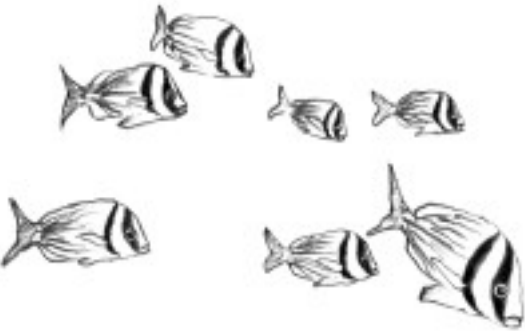


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DENVER SERVICE CENTER – MARGARET DELAURA, PDS
12795 WEST ALAMEDA PARKWAY
PO Box 25287
DENVER CO 80225-0287

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300



BISCAYNE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Friends,

It's been nearly 2 decades since Biscayne National Park, its visitors, and neighbors worked together to chart a course for the future. We are ready to begin this process that will produce a General Management Plan to provide guidance, vision, and direction to the park for the next 15 years. As you know, Biscayne National Park is part of daily life in South Florida. Whether you fish its waters, dive on its reefs and shipwrecks, explore its bay, camp on its islands, or enjoy its sunsets, Biscayne National Park is a source of enjoyment. Please help shape its future!

This task is a challenge and an opportunity. The park's mangrove shoreline, shallow estuarine bay, chain of undeveloped keys, and the northernmost coral reefs in the country support richly diverse communities of birds, fish, plants, and animals and provide an opportunity to experience the sights and

sounds of a tropical paradise. The park's archaeological sites, historic buildings, and shipwrecks represent South Florida's rich history encompassing early settlement, maritime trade, agricultural development, and the melding of diverse cultures. The lands and waters of Biscayne National Park have shaped the people of South Florida, and the people have shaped the resources. It is little wonder that Congress established the area as a unit of the national park system.

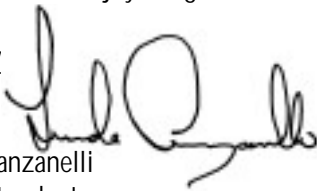
Time marches on, and planning for Biscayne National Park's future must consider past changes and anticipate future challenges. Growing populations, new technologies, altered land uses, and diverse visitor preferences affect management decisions. Partnerships with agencies and groups surrounding or near the park can greatly assist in creating a future that we define together. All these opportunities are waiting to be realized.

You are invited to participate in shaping Biscayne National Park's future. We want to hear your ideas and concerns about what should be considered and addressed in this process. You can participate by attending one of the meetings being held January 22 - 25 or by sending us written comments by letter or through email. Places, times, and addresses are listed on page 6. Please tell your friends and neighbors about this project.

Without your input, our plan will be limited; with your input, our plan will succeed. Please help us in this very important project that will guide future actions to create a healthy Biscayne National Park for all of us to enjoy for generations.

Sincerely,

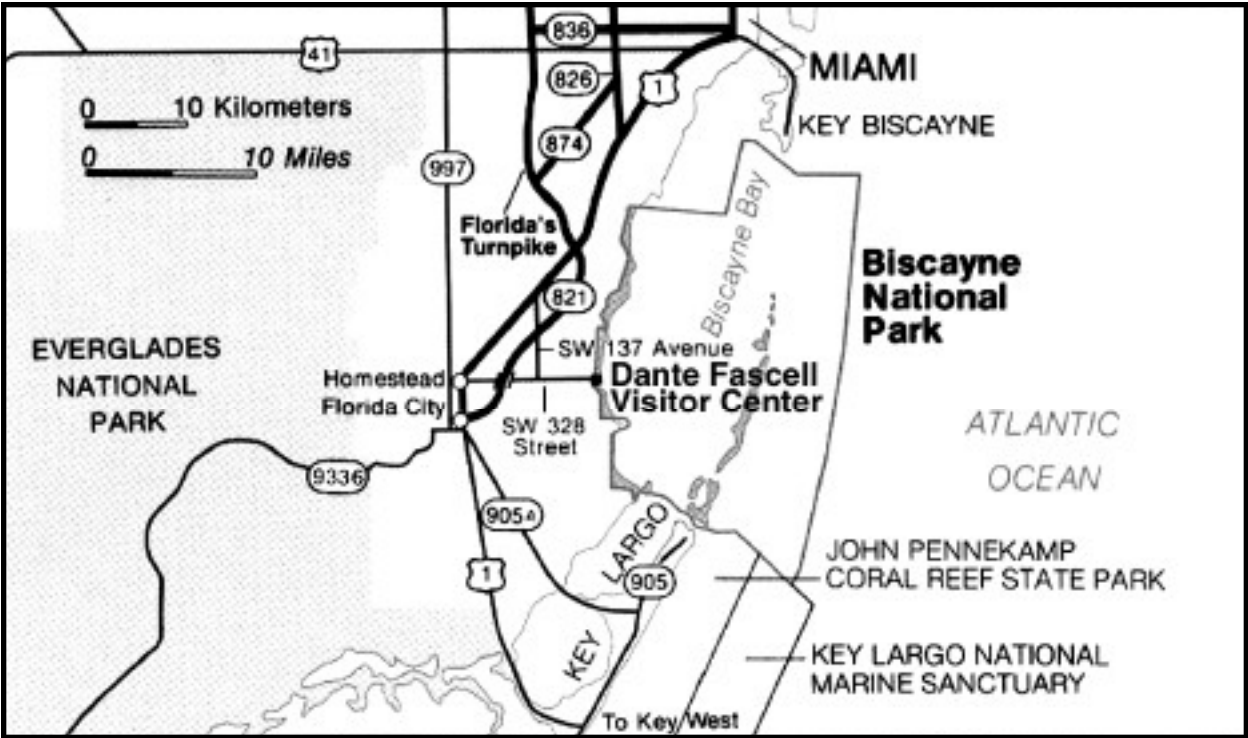
Linda Canzanelli
Superintendent



Background, Purpose, and Mission

Biscayne National Park was established by Congress in 1968 as Biscayne National Monument. The boundaries were expanded in 1974 “to add approximately 8,738 acres of land and water, including all of Swan Key and Gold Key.” In 1980 the area was again expanded by 80,000 acres to its current size and designated Biscayne National Park. It’s purpose is “to preserve and protect for the education, inspiration, recreation, and enjoyment of present and future generations a rare combination of terrestrial, marine, and amphibious life in a tropical setting of great natural beauty.”

- In fulfilling its mission, the park
- * conserves the rare combination of Florida coral reefs and keys, estuarine bay, mangrove coast, historic sites and associated habitats
 - * advocates responsible stewardship
 - * enables visitors to experience tranquil-



ity, scenic vistas, compatible recreation, and the underwater environment

Biscayne National Park is in Biscayne Bay and the offshore waters along the Atlantic coast south of Miami in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The park encompasses almost 173,000 acres and has relatively pristine estuarine and marine environments. Nearly 165,000 acres are water, containing about 72,000 acres of coral reefs. Approximately 9,100 acres is dry land, about 4,250 acres of which make up 42 islands or keys. Nearly 20 threatened and endangered species live

in the park. These species include sea turtles, crocodiles, and manatees.

The park has a rich cultural history involving Spanish exploration, pirates, shipwrecks, Native American use, plantations, and hurricanes. Biscayne National Park’s mission contains a recreational element, and boating is the most prevalent activity of park visitors. Both recreational and commercial fishing occur in the park. Other activities include snorkeling, diving, camping, picnicking, and hiking on nature trails.

Next Steps

Please provide your thoughts, ideas, and concerns by March 9, 2001. In the meantime, the planning team will continue to collect and analyze information about park resources, learn more about opportunities and obstacles to fulfilling park goals, and identify the diversity of resources and visitor experiences available in the park.

After we receive your comments, we will begin to identify alternative future visions for Biscayne National Park. These broad descriptions of desired resource conditions and visitor experiences will form the basis for the development of alternative management strategies.



How You Can Participate



Your involvement throughout the process is a key component for the success of the general management plan. Please take a moment to fill out the enclosed comment form and return it to the National Park Service planning team. Your thoughts and concerns provide valuable information on the goals and issues to be addressed in the document.

For more information about the planning process and park issues, you can contact the park at 305-230-1144 or log onto the Biscayne National Park home page at www.nps.gov/bisc.

The park will distribute newsletters during the planning process explaining and highlighting what we have heard from the public and other government agencies, describing the next steps, and providing information on public meeting/workshop schedules.

You will have the opportunity to participate in public meetings/workshops, hear

more about our progress, and share your concerns and insights. Please plan to attend one of the initial meetings/workshops listed below.



Locations, Dates, & Times

Plantation, FL

January 22, 2001
Holiday Inn
1711 N. University Drive
3:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Homestead, FL

January 23, 2001
Keys Gate Golf & Tennis Club
2300 Palm Drive
3:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Miami, FL

January 24, 2001
Renaissance Ballroom
5910 S.W. 8 St.
3:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Key Largo, FL

January 25, 2001
Westin Beach Resort Key Largo
97000 Overseas Highway
3:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Washington D.C.

January 30, 2001
Department of the Interior
Rachel Carson Room
1849 "C" St., N.W.
3:00 - 5:00 P.M.

General Management Planning



The general management plan process provides an opportunity to create a new vision for the park's future and define the park's role in relation to its surrounding community, ecosystem and historic setting all within Congress' original intent for the park.

The plan will provide guidance for future park management, resource protection, appropriate visitor activities and levels of use for specific sites, and appropriate facility development.

The plan will consider the park not only as a unit of the national park system but as a part of the greater Biscayne Bay ecosystem and the surrounding South Florida region. Continued protection of the scenic, natural, and cultural resources and visitor opportunities will be an important component of the plan.

The general management plan developed in this process will be firmly based on the reasons for the park's establishment and will provide a vision that will guide long-term management and subsequent planning efforts. However, it will not include specific facility designs, resolve all issues, or guarantee funding for the actions proposed in the approved plan.

Two other plans, a fisheries management plan and a comprehensive interpretive plan (for visitor information, programs, and education), will be prepared in concert with the general management plan.

The fisheries management plan will analyze fisheries data to determine baseline conditions of the fisheries in Biscayne National Park. The planning process will emphasize coordination and cooperation with interested agencies and the public to determine how to best manage the fisheries, including the roles and protocols for visitors who engage in recreational or commercial fishing.

The comprehensive interpretive plan will provide the overall vision and basis for decision-making relating to future visitor services, interpretation, and education in the park. The goal is to develop effective

visitor services, interpretation, and education that will enhance visitor experiences and resource preservation. Interpretive planning will describe the appropriate mix of personal services, program activities, media facilities, and other actions necessary to communicate the park's purpose, significance, and themes and values to visitors while protecting and preserving park resources.

These implementation plans will describe in specific detail how to achieve goals identified in the general management plan. Components of the two implementation plans will be in the general management plan.

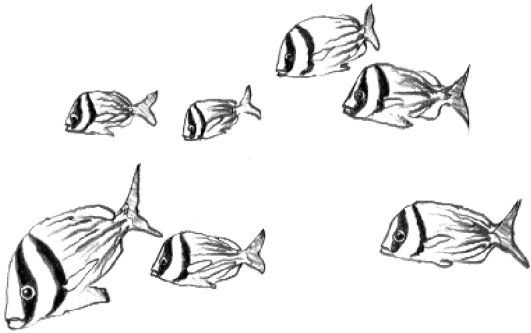


The Planning Process and Where We Are

Producing a general management plan involves many steps. We are in the initial 2 steps - identifying the scope of the

planning effort, setting goals, identifying obstacles to realizing those goals, and collecting data. In steps 3 and 4, alternative means to achieving those goals are developed. The relative benefits and impacts (including costs) of each approach are analyzed in an environmental impact statement that is prepared as part of the plan. These alternatives or optional approaches and the analysis are presented to the public for review.

In the final steps, after all parties have had a chance to comment on the alternatives and the analysis of their impacts, one alternative is selected and approved for implementation.



Step	Planning Activity	Public Involvement Opportunity
1	<p>Initiate Project.</p> <p>The planning team assembles, begins to identify the project’s scope and issues, and customizes the planning process.</p>	<p>Read this newsletter and comment on the response form. Join the mailing list.</p>
2	<p>Identify Planning Context.</p> <p>Based on the park’s enabling legislation, the team examines WHY the park was established and reaffirms the area’s mission. Team members collect and analyze relevant data and public input needed for planning.</p>	<p>Participate in public meetings the week of January 22nd, 2001.</p>
3	<p>Develop and Evaluate Alternatives.</p> <p>The planning team explores WHAT the park’s future should look like and proposes a range of reasonable alternatives for its future.</p>	<p>Read newsletters and send in your comments.</p>
4	<p>Prepare a Draft Document.</p> <p>Based on the impacts identified in the environmental impact statement and public comment, the team identifies a preferred alternative. A draft general management plan/environmental impact statement is published. The draft document describes the planning context, sets the foundation for HOW management alternatives would attain desired future conditions, and the impacts of implementing each of the alternatives.</p>	<p>Read the draft plan and send in your comments.</p>
5	<p>Publish Final Document.</p> <p>Based on public comment, environmental analysis, and other information, the team revises the draft general management plan/ environmental impact statement and distributes a final plan to the public.</p>	<p>Read the final plan and summary.</p>
6	<p>Implement the Approved Plan.</p> <p>After the record of decision is issued, when funding is available, implement the approved management plan.</p>	